



MERCER ISLAND YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

YFS Counselors In Every School

Our Mental Health Counselors work collaboratively with students, families and school staff to meet the social and emotional needs of students in every school.

Counselors provide confidential counseling, parent and staff consultation and age-specific groups and clubs.

Mental Health Counselors in Elementary Schools - [All emails end in @mercerislandschools.org](mailto:mercerislandschools.org)

Services include Student Support Groups: Friendship, social skills, divorce and grief & loss; Social-Emotional Classroom Education: Mindfulness, Kelso's Choice, Playground Mentors, Second Step Bullying Prevention, stress management and friendship skills; Student Activities: Peer mediation, New Student Lunch Groups, Second Step bullying prevention, and Friendship Groups; and Individual Student Counseling and Parent Support/Consultation **Telemental health services available**. See below for email prefixes.



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Mental Health Counselors at Islander Middle School

Services include:

- Student Support Groups: Living with Divorce, Options to Anger, Peer Relationships, Boys Council and Girls Friendship Groups
- Student Activities: Sources of Strength Peer Leadership, SOS Outreach Program, Peer Mediation, Girl's Empowerment Group and WEB Leadership
- Substance Abuse Prevention: Red Ribbon Week
- Classroom Education: Second Step Bullying Prevention
- Individual Counseling and Support (**Telemental Health available**)
- Parent and School Staff: Consultation and Support



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Mental Health and Substance Abuse Counselors at Mercer Island High School

Services include:

- Individual Counseling and Support (**Telemental Health available**)
- Youth Leadership Programs: Forefront Suicide Prevention, Peer Educators, Student Club Support, and Minds Matter and S.A.F.E. Clubs
- Substance Abuse Services: Prevention, Assessment, Intervention, Referral, Support, Re-entry and Parent Support and Education
- New Students: Orientation and Individual Support
- Classroom Education: Mental Health awareness and Substance Abuse Prevention



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How to Connect to your YFS School Counselor

What Youth and Family Services Counselors Do

Youth and Family Services (YFS) counselors can help with individual and family issues related to school readiness, child development, social skills, family conflict, mental health and drugs/alcohol. There are licensed or certified mental health providers located in the schools to reduce barriers to students accessing services. YFS counselors can help assess personal or school problems and find solutions using formal counseling or informal supports while acting as advocates for your student's mental health and wellness. There is no fee for YFS school counselor services. YFS school counselors are employees of the City of Mercer Island.

How Does My Child Meet the Counselor?

Each Mercer Island public school has a YFS counselor on site (one in each elementary; two in middle and high schools). All students can self-refer in the school building and parents can call counselors directly to request support. Teachers or administrators sometimes refer students. YFS counselors often visit classrooms to teach social-emotional skills or topics related to mental health or substance abuse prevention (depending on grade level). No counseling is ever mandatory.

How do Student - Counselor Meetings Work?

YFS counselors meet with students in classroom settings, individually in their office, or in small groups (*following current City and School COVID-19 safety protocols*). Group meetings can be with students with similar issues, such as divorce or family illness. Counselors often come into the classroom to teach subjects that affects everyone, such as good study skills or bullying prevention. By request, students can receive Individual counseling during the school day (meetings coordinated to minimize academic disruption).

How Confidential Are School Counseling Services?

YFS mental health counseling is confidential between the child and parent (youth 13 and older must sign a release for parent involvement in formal counseling per state law). School counselors and school district staff can coordinate when allowed by rules of confidentiality—students or parents can give additional permissions as indicated. Exceptions to confidentiality include cases where student safety is involved, such as self-harm, harm of others, and physical or sexual abuse.

Youth & Family Services Counselors:

YFS is a department of the City of Mercer Island. For additional information, contact MIYFS at (206) 275-7657 or miyfs@mercerisland.gov.